

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 1996

Moss Landing Harbor District Office

Moss Landing, CA

Conservation Working Group members in attendance included: Rachel Saunders, Chair (Center for Marine Conservation); Daphne White (League of Women Voters); Susan Brown (Friends of the Sea Otter); Ellen Faurot-Daniels (Friends of the Sea Otter); Melissa Hippard (Save Our Shores); Donna Meyers (Coastal Watershed Council); Thomas LaHue (Surfrider Foundation); and Mark Pickett and Jane DeLay (MBNMS).

Special Guest: Holly Price, Director, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP).

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 10:20 a.m.

II. CWG ADMINISTRATION

1) Review minutes from January 16, 1996 meeting: CWG members were provided with a set of DRAFT minutes from the January 16, 1996 meeting and the November 28, 1995 minutes. Comments and corrections should be sent via facsimile to Jane DeLay at (831) 647-4250, or call (831) 647-4246.

2) Review Agenda:

3) Set March meeting: The date for the March meeting was set for Tuesday, March 19, 1996 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Moss Landing Harbor District Office.

4) Announcements and other meeting dates: Please refer to the attached agenda for a listing of upcoming meetings and events.

III. SANCTUARY REPORT

Mark Pickett, MBNMS, Assistant Manager, provided the following report on Sanctuary activities:

Education:

Among other things, Liz Love, MBNMS, Education Coordinator, is working to:

• develop an on-line magazine for children.

• institute a Sanctuary visitors center on the Wharf in Santa Cruz. The city is willing to provide the space if the Sanctuary provides personnel. Save Our Shores is spearheading the efforts and the Sanctuary has offered to pay for signs and displays.

The next planning meeting is scheduled for March 6; and to,

á prepare press releases for the Sanctuary Currents i96 Symposium and finalizing arrangements for the event.

Finally, a student from the Monterey Institute for International Studies is interning at the Sanctuary office and is responsible for translating Sanctuary publications into Japanese. She will also be collecting literature from around the area that can include a Sanctuary message.

Research:

Andrew DeVogelaere, MBNMS Research Coordinator, is preparing the McArthur Cruise plan; working with Charles Wahle, Director, Technical Branch for NOAA Sanctuaries and Reserves Division, to streamline the permitting process and is hoping to include institutional permits; completing the data visualization project in time for the Sanctuary Currents i96 Symposium; and, preparing to participate in the California Biodiversity Council's upcoming conference.

In addition, Aaron King, MBNMS Program Specialist, is working with the California Marine Sanctuaries Foundation to try and secure grant money from the California Department of Fish and Game.

Miscellaneous:

1) Public Relations -- Public Relations is becoming more and more of a priority for the Sanctuary. As a result of the recent Advisory Council workshop on improving public relations efforts and the attendance of two public affairs officers from NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, the Sanctuary has been given funds to contract a full-time position to handle public relations.

Furthermore, members of the staff will also be getting more involved with public relations activities.

2) Enforcement -- an anonymous contributor has accepted the Sanctuary's proposal to provide some 650k to go toward staffing and equipment for enforcement. Scott Kathey, MBNMS Program Specialist, will help coordinate enforcement activities for the Sanctuary. In response to requests from CWG members, a more detailed report on the enforcement plan will be presented at the March meeting.

3) Shark Chumming -- There will be three public meetings to discuss the shark chumming issue. The dates and locations are listed on the attached agenda.

4) Vessel Traffic Study -- Negotiations on the study have been held between NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard. On a staff level, language has been agreed upon. Options and recommendations will be included in the report.

The report still has to be signed off in NOAA and the Coast Guard before going up through the Departments of Commerce and Transportation.

5) Jet Skis -- There will be a meeting on Wednesday, February 21, hosted by Save Our Shores, to discuss options for the use of personal watercraft in the Sanctuary and to discuss and review a draft brochure put together by the MBNMS. The Sanctuary is presently working to secure the required permits jet ski to install marker buoys for the four jet ski zones.

6) Oil Spill -- Mark Pickett will be attending a meeting on Wednesday, February 21 to discuss equipment transfer and a Sanctuary "small oil spill plan" that also includes Moss Landing Harbor. The meeting is at 10 a.m. in the Moss Landing Harbor District Office.

7) MBNMS Northern Boundary -- The Sanctuary office is spending a lot of time on trying to resolve the situation regarding the authority over the northern part of the Sanctuary. The CWG agreed that, at this point, it would be best if NOAA quickly resolved the issue rather than letting it become a public spectacle.

IV. WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAM (WQPP) REPORT

Dr. Holly Price, Director of the MBNMS WQPP, provided an update on the program's accomplishments and strategies for the coming year. The WQPP is one of the more proactive and visible projects of the MBNMS. CWG members were provided with three handouts outlining the strategies to date. (See Attached)

Among the numerous tasks completed in the first year were the following:

- focused on gathering information and obtaining input about the area and its watersheds -- activities were focused on learning where water quality was impaired and why;
- surveyed the current monitoring practices and looked to areas where cooperation could be facilitated;

- initiated a WQPP education program and began outreach projects -- brochures and a poster. The poster is being reduced and will be included as an insert with local sewer bills;

- completed a set of strategies for urban run-off issues and have begun the process of securing funding sources for implementation of the strategies. The document of urban run-off strategies is being bound and will soon be available for distribution. It contains an action plan and an implementation schedule. Dr. Price commented on the high level of detail for each of the strategies identified in the document and that for each strategy there is a whole series of steps for implementation. An example of actions identified in the plan include: 1) beginning coordination efforts with the Regional Stormwater Task Force; 2) promoting education/outreach to the public; 3) implementing technical training programs; and, 4) developing an Urban Run-off model program;

- nearing completion of the same process for Marinas and Boating. Among the strategies identified are: 1) instituting public education and technical training programs; 2) improving oil and bilge waste recovery practices (the MBNMS helped to purchase a bilge pump for Monterey Harbor.); 3) improving hazardous and toxic materials management; 4) improving boat repair and cleaning practices including underwater hull cleaning techniques; and, 5) instituting a Harbor Pollution Control Progress Review, a check list of good harbor practices and a check list for gauging progress. Also provides a public relations opportunity for the harbors and the WQPP;

- beginning to identify strategies and begin "bridge-building" efforts with the agriculture industry.

The next focus for the WQPP is agriculture. Dr. Price presented two solid reasons the industry should be willing to cooperate with the WQPP including:

- 1) the WQPP's sensitivity to various group needs. For example: Growers are willing to cooperate on efforts to control erosion, but are concerned about the lack of public understanding in the use of pesticides. By working with the WQPP, the public can be educated about the impacts of agricultural products used today versus what has been used in the past and still shows up, e.g. DDT;

2) the WQPP can potentially assist growers through the regulatory and permit process by working to streamline the requirements.

Present and future goals for the WQPP overall include:

- á Developing good examples of structural and non-structural controls;
- á Implementing viable sedimentation/erosion control prevention;
- á Modifying the CEQA checklist;
- á Standardizing permit monitoring practices for water quality control (At present, there is no single source of documentation providing information on regional monitoring. A badly needed data-set showing long-term trends in monitoring is non-existent. The intent of the WQPP is to streamline the monitoring efforts by instituting a standardized process);
- á Developing an interagency environmental database -- an annual report containing data and trends that can be used by management for defining monitoring priorities;
- á Coordinating general water quality strategies;
- á Instituting an interagency watershed management council responsible for ensuring the long-term coordination of water quality strategies.

In response to questions concerning the role of enforcement in the WQPP strategies, Dr. Price answered that the first step to effective enforcement begins with public education and the distribution of materials to achieve an adequate level of knowledge about water quality issues. Through partnerships with the harbors and interested parties, they hope to put the emphasis on voluntary compliance.

Dr. Price continued by mentioning that the WQPP strategies rely upon the continued coordination between participating agencies. She emphasized that the Sanctuary is not the designated leader in every strategy, hence the most effective results will come from local organizations and citizen commitment to the program, including the Sanctuary Advisory Council and its three working groups.

A list of ideas for how the CWG may become more involved in the WQPP was provided and working members took a moment to review them. (See Attached.) Additional ways to become involved were contributed by the members and are listed below:

- á Encourage the Regional Water Quality Control Board to take a more active role in the WQPP program. Each member organization of the CWG should write to the RWQCB and request that they: 1) assign a staff person to the Sanctuary office to work on coordination strategies; 2) take a lead on regional monitoring; and 3) help find a source of funding for the WQPP or some of its strategies;
- á Urge WQPP participating agencies to allocate staff time and funds to the project in order to provide more stability to the strategies;
- á Include mention of the WQPP as part of their message when speaking with constituents and media contacts.
- á Convince community newspapers to publish a piece about the WQPP; its goals and accomplishments (CWG members suggested that the WQPP have a camera ready copy of the Urban run-off poster available to send to interested publications);
- á Urge the Sanctuary's new public relations person to make the WQPP a priority and take a pro-active role in marketing the accomplishments of the WQPP and creating a user friendly piece about the program;
- á Promote stormwater issues now, in midst of the storm season, and explain what the water quality impacts are from stormdrain run-off.
- á Distribute the WQPP poster to teachers. (CWG members requested that Holly

provide them with 8 1/2 x 10 versions of the poster so that organizations can also include them in their mailings.)

á Utilize the volunteer network programs such as BAY NET and the Save Our Shores Sanctuary Stewards to help educate the public about the WQPP. (Suggest offering them a class on the WQPP. Also, work information about the WQPP and its goals into the on-going public education efforts of the conservation organizations represented on the CWG.)

á Focus public attention on the need for smarter monitoring programs. (The CWG can help to start this.) Help link government agencies with strong volunteer programs. (The CWG could help co-sponsor a volunteer monitoring workshop.)

á Present information about water quality and the WQPP in a more user friendly manner -
- Less technical.

The Chair asked CWG members to think about ways in which their organizations or constituencies could participate in supporting the WQPP decide what the priorities are (in terms of which activities to undertake first) and to bring their suggestions to the next meeting for discussion. The CWG can act as a coordinating body to reduce the risk of duplication of efforts among the member organizations.

CWG members are encouraged to contact Holly Price at (831) 647-4247 for more information or to provide suggestions.

Other Water quality issues mentioned during the meeting are as follows:

1) Thomas LaHue -- Goleta's wastewater treatment plant -- Tom expressed concern that a change in the regional board's decision to force secondary treatment may set a damaging precedent in wastewater regulations. Not only for reasons of consistency within the region, but also because of the expense monitoring requires, that could be spent on higher treatment instead -- cheaper in the long run. CWG members are encouraged to write to the State Board about this issue and support secondary, or higher, treatment.

2) The NPDES reviews -- Efforts are being made to relax the permit review from five to ten years. There will be a public hearing on this issue and CWG members are urged to attend.

3) Assemblyman McPherson -- is introducing a bill in support of long-term funding for Mussel Watch and Toxic substances. The contact in Assemblyman McPherson's office is Jennifer Stanley at (916) 445-8496 for more information.

4) California Regional Water Recycling Project -- project designers have stepped back from the proposed alternatives that suggest or imply agricultural wastewater discharge into the ocean. The decision on behalf of the project organizers was the result of strong letters and statements by the public, the Sanctuary, the Advisory Council, and the CWG.

5) Dredging in San Francisco and Oakland Harbors and management of the dredged spoils -- an EIS should be forthcoming and will consider the issues.

6) San Francisco Outfall -- their NPDES permit will soon be up for renewal. This is the biggest discharger in the Sanctuary.

7) Surfrider Foundation -- the Surfrider Foundation has relocated their lab to Soquel High School and will be involving students.

V. OTHER ISSUES

1) Shark chumming -- the proposed rule by NOAA was released on Monday, February 19. The rule bans the use of attractants for white sharks in State waters and focuses on addressing specific user conflicts. The rule serves both as protection for humans and white sharks. The 30-day comment period ends March 12. There will be various meetings concerning shark chumming in the next few weeks.

2) Sanctuary Conference -- CWG members were urged to take flyers and to distribute as many as possible. The focus on Friday night is the Ricketts lecture to be given by Dr. Steve Webster, Director of Education for the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Also on the schedule for Friday night is the Awards presentation and reception; Les Strnad will be presented with the award for excellence in conservation efforts. Volunteers for BAY NET and the Sanctuary Stewards Program will also receive awards. Highlights for Saturday include the site characterization project; the working groups' concurrent sessions on education, conservation, and research, and the poster contest.

3) Coast Guard Group Monterey -- the Coast Guard has made a decision to downsize Group Monterey to a Station. Basically, this means that the equipment will remain, but that personnel and authority will be reduced. The change should be transparent to the boating community and the general public as the Coast Guard Station will retain all rescue and enforcement capabilities. However, concern remains that moving authority to San Francisco will hurt our oil spill response and enforcement efforts.

4) Cruise ships in Monterey Bay -- Seabourne Cruise Lines will making Monterey a regular port of call beginning this Fall. The city of Monterey is very supportive of the venture as it will provide excellent economic opportunities for the city's merchants. There are potential public relations, educational, and economic benefits for the Sanctuary as well. However, some concerns have been raised such as: threats of discharge; concern for the marine mammal populations, namely the gray whales during their migration; introduction of exotic species into the Sanctuary; and concern for disturbance of the sea floor from anchoring.

5) Elephant Seals at Piedras Blancas -- The situation at Piedras Blancas continues with concerns for human safety and threats to the elephant seal population. At present, the California Highway Patrol has increased enforcement in the area and CALTRANS has placed "No Parking" signs and barriers along the highway. NMFS Enforcement Officer, Roy Torres, has also placed signs in the area.

Presentations on the situation by CALTRANS and the California Coastal Commission are on the agenda for the next Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting. There is an effort to develop a management plan.

6) Kelp Harvesting -- concerns have been raised about the harvesting of kelp in the Sanctuary, especially along Cannery Row..

7) Sanctuary Advisory Council Public Relations workshop -- the workshop was attended by two public affairs officers from NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. NOAA has agreed to allocate funds to support a full-time public relations person for the Sanctuary.

8) Sanctuary stewards -- 22 Sanctuary Stewards were graduated on the January 27. Save Our Shores will release an annual report on the program in the next couple of weeks. May is targeted for starting the next group of volunteers.

9) BAY NET will be starting another class on March 6 at the Pacific Grove NOAA facility. The eight week class will be completed in May. Eighteen volunteers are now "on duty" in

Pacific Grove and Monterey.

10) Announcement -- Montaro Mountain Hike -- an early spring flower hike with flower specialists along three historic trails that link Half Moon Bay and San Francisco will happen on March 2 beginning at 10:30 a.m. The walk is only 6-miles and should be completed by 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane M. DeLay
MBNMS Advisory Council Coordinator

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